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THE ROLE OF CALENDRICAL DATA IN GNOSTIC LITERATURE*

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A significant number of passages not only in the gnostic literature itself but also in the writings of early Christian heresiologists refer to calendrical data in conjunction with gnostic cosmological systems. Since calendrical issues had the potential for being contentious – the Dead Sea Scrolls and pseudepigraphical writings such as *Jubilees* and *I Enoch*, for example, display strong calendrical polemics – it appears appropriate to raise the question of the overall role of calendrical matters in gnostic thought. Specifically, it is the purpose of this article to collect and analyse the primary calendrical passages found in gnostic literature and to draw attention to possible implications of calendrical matters for gnostic teaching in general.

Three distinct calendrical systems are reflected in the extant gnostic literature. Two of these systems have a 365-day year. A difference exists, however, in the subdivision of the year, that is, in the one system the total of 365 days is broken down into 360 ordinary and 5 epagomenal days while in the other system the 365 days are seen as a single unit. The third system has a year of 360 days.

The clearest reference to a 365-day year with a major subdivision of 360 and 5 days is found in the *Pistis Sophia*. That references to the number 365 indeed have calendrical implications is obvious from *Pistis Sophia* 99.[1] Here Jesus is depicted as telling Mary that one day in the realm of light is a 1000 years in the world (*kosmos*) so that 365,000 years in the world are a single year in the realm of light. Consequently, according to the *Pistis Sophia* a year consists of 365 days.[2] That this year is seen as consisting of 360 plus 5 days is evident from chapters 136[3] and 139[4]. In both of these passages it is stated that 5 great archons are in charge of

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360 archons. This gives a total of 365.[5] A further division of the year into 12 months is also evident in the *Pistis Sophia.* It is stated in chapter 15[6] that the Heimarmene exerts its influence to the right and left for six months respectively and the number 12 plays an important role in depicting various structures in the heavenly world.[7]

It appears that the calendar outlined in the *Pistis Sophia* is of Egyptian provenance. There is wide scholarly agreement that prior to 239 B.C. the Egyptians used a civil calendar of 365 days. This year was divided into 12 months of 30 days and the remaining 5 epagomenal days at the end of the year were handed over to the priests for various rites and festivals.[8]

It has been argued that in 239 B.C. a calendar of 365-1/4 days was introduced.[9] While there undoubtedly is evidence that such a decree was passed, A. E. Samuel has argued convincingly that this decree had little actual effect on the Egyptian calendar.[10] It should also be noted that since the intention of the decree was to add a 6th epagomenal day every fourth year,[11] the structure of 360 plus 5 would still have held for 3 out of 4 years. Consequently, this structure would have continued to characterize the Egyptian calendar for the purposes of the Gnostics.

The Egyptian provenance of the calendar in the *Pistis Sophia* is not only evident from its general structure but also from specific calendrical references. It is stated that the ascension of Jesus took place on the 15th of Tybi,[12] one of the months of the Egyptian calendar.

Let us now consider another type of 365-day year, that is, one in which the 365 days are not subdivided into blocks of 360 and 5 days but are seen as a complete unit. The clearest evidence for such a calendar is found in the version of *The Apocryphon of John* contained in Codex II of Nag Hammadi.[13] In two different passages, i.e. 11,25 and 19,3, a total of 365 angels are mentioned.

Giversen states in his commentary that it is obvious that the number 365 refers to the sum of the days of the year.[14] While it is true that this number is not explicitly given calendrical significance, there are no internal indications in this writing which prohibit such an identification. Indeed, it is clear that the author/redactor of *The Apocryphon of John* is conscious of calendrical considerations for 11,33–35 contains the following explanation, "the seventh is Sabbede, he has a shining fire-face. This is the sevenness of the week."[15] It should be noted that this passage is found in the immediate context of 11,25 where the number 365 occurs.

Let us now turn our attention to the derivation of the number 365 in *The Apocryphon of John* Codex II. In 19,3 only the total occurs. In

11,23–25, on the other hand, the process by which 365 is derived is given, "And the archons created seven powers for themselves, and the powers created for themselves six angels for each one until they became 365 angels."[16]

Giversen sets up two quite different calculations in order to arrive at the total of 365. He does this in order to emphasize the nonspecific nature of the account and concludes that "the establishment of the host of 365 angels was not important, but the total of 365 was important in itself."[17]

Such a conclusion appears to be justified. In addition to Giversen's arguments it should be noted that the passage stresses that the seven powers continued creating angels in multiples of six *until* there was a total of 365 angels. This in fact implies that not all powers created a set of 6 angels. Consequently, there was no symmetry in the structure. Indeed, it may be that the whole process of derivation is left vague in this passage because it is really impossible to provide a symmetrical structure for the number 365 in terms of a week of 7 days which is after all stressed in the immediate context, i.e. 11,33–35.

It should be noted that the description of the 365-day year in *The Apocryphon of John* Codex II leaves no room for a substructure stressing the numbers 360 and 5 as was the case in the Egyptian calendar outlined in the *Pistis Sophia*. Indeed, it appears that the Julian calendar provides a much better background for *The Apocryphon of John* Codex II than an Egyptian calendar.

The Julian calendar, which became the standard calendar of the Roman world in 46 B.C.,[18] regarded the days of the year as a single unit, that is, no distinction was made between ordinary and epagomenal days. As was shown above, in *The Apocryphon of John* Codex II, the sum of 365 was also treated as a single unit.

In contrast to the Egyptian calendar where all the months consisted of 30 days, the months of the Julian calendar were not of equal lengths. Consequently, there was less symmetry in the latter calendar. This difference may be reflected in the *Pistis Sophia* and *Apocryphon of John* Codex II. In *Pistis Sophia* chapter 15[19] there is a reference to the symmetrical structure of the months, in *The Apocryphon of John* Codex II, on the other hand, there are no allusions to the months.

It should also be noted that there is an explicit reference to the 7-day week in *The Apocryphon of John* Codex II 11,33–35. It has been established that by the beginning of the third century A.D. the seven-day planetary week had been adopted in private life throughout the Roman

Empire.[20] Evidence of this practice can be traced back to at least A.D. 79.[21] In the *Pistis Sophia*, on the other hand, there is no explicit reference to a seven-day week. This silence may be significant for there is no evidence that a seven-day week played a role in the Egyptian calendar to which the *Pistis Sophia* refers.[22] However, since Christians generally appear to have held to a seven-day week, the preceding argument is quite tentative.

The fact that the Julian calendar consisted of 365–1/4 rather than 365 days does not invalidate the argument that it provides the background for *The Apocryphon of John* Codex II. After all, in this writing the total sum is related to heavenly realities and it would hardly have been credible to refer, for example, to a quarter of an angel. Thus 365 days was the closest possible gnostic approximation to a calendar of 365-1/4 days. It should also be noted that in the Julian calendar an extra day was added only once every four years. Consequently, the 365-day year did in fact agree with the Julian calendar in 3 out of every 4 years.[23]

In conjunction with the discussion of the various forms of the 365-day calendar it is also instructive to consider the use of the term Abrasax.[24] Both Irenaeus[25] and Hippolytus[26] recount that Basilides taught that there were 365 heavens and that the archon of this system is Abrasax whose name gives the number 365.[27] In addition it is explicitly stated that Basilides taught that the year has 365 days in conformity with the number of heavens. Since Basilides taught in Egypt one may speculate that the archon Abrasax and the corresponding 365-day calendar are primarily of Egyptian provenance.

A study of the term Abrasax in the Nag Hammadi literature neither proves nor disproves the foregoing suggestion. The term Abrasax occurs in the following writings: *The Gospel of the Egyptians* (Codex III) 52,26; 53,9 65,1;[28] *The Apocalypse of Adam* (Codex V) 75,22 and *Zostrianos* (Codex VIII) 47,13. Judging from the title, it would appear that the references contained in *The Gospel of the Egyptians* would lend support to the Egyptian origin of the term Abrasax. However, as has been noted by Böhlig and Wisse the reference to Egypt could also be interpreted as being the work of "non-Egyptians who wanted to see in it references to Egypt."[29]

Both in *The Gospel of the Egyptians* and in *The Apocalypse of Adam* prominence is given to the figure of Seth. Since there was an Egyptian god of that name it is conceivable that this god may have been connected with the Seth of the Old Testament.[30] Böhlig and Wisse point out, how-

ever, that only "With great caution can one infer a connection with Egypt on the basis of the name Seth alone."[31] Consequently, while there are some indications that the term Abrasax may have a special historical connection with Egypt, these indications by no means provide definitive proof.

Let us now consider the third calendrical system reflected in the gnostic literature. There are a number of references to a 360-day year. *Eugnostos the Blessed* (Codex III) 83,10–85,9 refers to 5 spiritual powers/firmaments, 12 powers/aeons/angels, 72 powers/heavens and 360 powers/heavens. In 82,2ff. it is explicitly stated that the 12 months came to be a type of the 12 powers and the 360 days of the year a type of the 360 powers who were revealed by the Saviour. In addition a more general correspondence is drawn in 84,8ff. to the effect that the angels who came from these powers became a type of the hours and the moments.[32]

A 360-day year consisting of 12 months of 30 days each is also reflected in *A Valentinian Exposition* (Codex XI) 30,34–38. "... the Twelve from Man and Church brought forth and [made] the Thirty so as to make [the three] hundred sixty become the Pleroma of the year. And the year of the Lord..."[33]

Finally there are references to the number 360 in the BG 8502 and Codex III versions of *The Apocryphon of John*. Both in BG 50,17ff. and Codex III 23,17f. 360[34] angels and 7 authorities are mentioned. In BG 39,7–15 not only the total sum of 360 is given but it is stated that the 360 angelic powers are derived on the basis of groups of 7 and 12 angels. In the corresponding passage in Codex III 16,9–13 there is a reference to 7 and 12 angels but probably due to homoeoteleuton[35] the total sum of angelic powers is not found. In addition, in BG 42,6–8 and Codex III 18,6–8 there are explicit references to a week of seven days.

What is the historical background for a 360-day calendar? It has been suggested that the 360 days should be seen in terms of a 365-day year. Giversen, for example, suggests with reference to *The Apocryphon of John* that "360 must be reminiscent of the civil year of 360 days, before the insertion of the five epagomens..."[36] While this suggestion cannot be discounted, other possible backgrounds should also be considered, namely, a 360-day year in the context of a 364-day year and a calendar consisting of 360 days as such.

The former type of calendar can best be illustrated by means of the Jewish apocalyptic writings of *I Enoch* and *Jubilees*. While both of these writings stress a solar year of 364 days they nevertheless allude to only 360 practical days.

I Enoch 82,4–6 insists on a 364-day year. However, in 74,9–11 it is stated that in five years the sun has an overplus of 30 days over the moon. Since the lunar year has 354 days (78,15ff.) a year of 360 days is implied. 74,17 states that all months have 30 days. The key to this seeming contradiction is found in 75,1. Here it is stated that the four intercalary days are not counted in the reckoning of the year. This passage thus implies that the 364-day year consists of 360 practical days and of 4 non-days, that is, days which are added in order to remain in harmony with heavenly reality but are not taken into account when making everyday use of the calendar.

In *Jubilees* 6,32 a complete year is not only defined in terms of 364 days (6,32) but also in terms of 52 weeks of days (6,30). In addition, the 364-day year is defended for the dogmatic reason that all festivals should fall on the same day of the week each year (6,32f.). *Jubilees* thus appears to be concerned with 364 rather than 360 practical days. Yet in 5,27 it is stated that five months are equal to 150 days, thus pointing to 360 practical days as was the case in I Enoch.

A. Strobel has pointed out that according to Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII,18, the Montanists, despite their better knowledge regarded 360 days as the length of the year. Strobel suggests that this was done in agreement with *I Enoch* where the intercalary days are not counted in the reckoning of the year.[37] It is thus conceivable that the 360-day gnostic year reflects a calendar of 360 practical days in the context of a 364-day rather than 365-day year.[38]

Let us now consider the possibility that the 360-day gnostic year should be viewed without reference to any additional days. Such a calendar is reflected in *I Enoch* insofar as it is rejected. It was noted above that *I Enoch* leaves room for 360 practical days in an overall 364-day calendar. On the other hand, it vehemently rejects a 360-day calendar that does not take account of four additional intercalary days.[39] A 360-day year has been specifically connected with the Dustan sect of the Samaritans.[40]

With respect to the 360-day year the additional possibility should not be overlooked that we may be dealing with a theoretical rather than practical calendar, that is, it may be an ideal calendar rather than one that was used in everyday life. It may be that the number 360 should be seen in relationship to the number of degrees in the zodiac. Indeed, Irenaeus states that the Marcosians[41] viewed the calendar of 360 days in terms of the 360 degrees of the zodiacal circle.[42]

The three calendrical systems discussed up to this point are explicitly

reflected in the gnostic literature. Let us now look at the possibility that there is an additional implicit reference to yet another calendrical system.

It was noted above that *Eugnostos the Blessed* (Codex III) 83,10–85,9 refers to a cosmology in terms of the numbers 5, 12, 72 and 360. Only the numbers 12 and 360, however, are explicitly given calendrical significance. The question of the possible calendrical significance of the numbers 5 and 72 thus arises.

Bousset[43] has argued that in Babylon the observance of a five-day week[44] preceded that of a 7-day week. Consequently, a year of 360 days would be comprised of 72 five-day weeks. Bousset suggests this type of calendar with reference to the *Pistis Sophia.* It was noted above that this suggestion is not convincing. On the other hand, that vestiges of such a calendar may be found in *Eugnostos the Blessed,* is more plausible.

That the author/redactor or the readers of *Eugnostos the Blessed* were aware of the calendrical implications of the numbers 72 and 5 cannot, however, be taken for granted. Especially the number 72 appears to have had other than a calendrical significance. For example, Schoedel has argued that the references to the number 72 in *The First Apocalypse of James* (Codex V) 26,15–18 should be viewed in terms of the Jewish background of the 72 nations of the earth.[45] It is also doubtful whether any calendrical significance should be attached to the 72 tongues in *The Concept of our Great Power* (Codex VI) 41,6; the 72 archons in the *Second Book of Jeû* 43[46] and the 72 gods and 72 languages in *On the Origin of the World* (Codex II) 105,12–17.

Having outlined the specific calendrical data in the extant gnostic literature, let us now see what can be said regarding the general calendrical ideology of the Gnostics. As is evident from the foregoing discussion, both the gnostic writings themselves and those of the early Christian heresiologists document the gnostic view that calendrical data such as the length of the year, month and week were governed by cosmological realities.[47] For example, in *Eugnostos the Blessed* (Codex III) 84,4ff. the 360 days of the year are seen as a type of the 360 powers.[48]

The interdependence of calendrical data and cosmology appears to be merely one aspect of the general gnostic axiom that there is a correspondence between the heavenly world and the earthly world, insofar as the latter is an imitation or counterfeit of the former. This is clearly indicated by the following two passages. The *Apocryphon of John* (BG) 20,15f. states that "This Aeon received the imprint of that imperishable Aeon"[49] and *The Hypostasis of the Archons* (Codex II) 96,11ff. relates:

"But it was by the will of the Father of the Entirety that they all came into being – after the pattern of all the Things Above – so that the sum of chaos might be attained."[50]

That the Gnostics held the foregoing view is substantiated by Irenaeus. In *Against Heresies* II,7–8 he argues that created things are not images or shadows of realities in the Pleroma as the Gnostics claim. One of the arguments he uses to support this claim is that fierce creatures that are hurtful and destroy others could hardly be images of realities in the Pleroma.[51] It is unlikely that Gnostics would have claimed that *everything* in the earthly world had its direct counterpart in the Pleroma. Layton, in commenting on *The Hypostasis of the Archons* (Codex II) 96,11 ff., states: "Both the lower progeny and the higher one are providentially organized 'after the pattern of the realms that are above'. This pattern is the only source of order in an otherwise chaotic world."[52] Indeed, one earthly phenomenon contributing to order was that of fixed times and seasons. Consequently, calendrical matters could be viewed as reflecting heavenly realities.[53]

While it appears that Gnostics shared the same general calendrical ideology, the first part of the present study revealed that they did not all adhere to a single calendrical system. Calendrical data thus did not serve as a unifying principle among Gnostics as a whole. As a matter of fact, to a limited extent these differences can be utilized in the identification of gnostic groups.

Irenaeus states with reference to the Valentinians that they claim that the month has 30 days on account of the 30 aeons and the year 12 months on account of the 12 aeons that are in the Pleroma.[54] Thus we arrive at a 360-day year of 12 months of 30 days each. It should be noted that Irenaeus also ascribes this system to a sub-group of the Valentinians, namely, the Marcosians.[55] From the perspective of calendrical considerations the untitled writing comprising pages 22,1–39,39 of Codex XI from Nag Hammadi has therefore been appropriately entitled "*A Valentinian Exposition*"[56] for in 30,34 ff. it is stated "... the Twelve from Man and Church brought forth and [made] the Thirty so as to make [the three] hundred sixty become the Pleroma of the year."[57]

A calendar of 365 days, on the other hand, is associated with Basilides. Irenaeus states that Basilides taught that there were 365 heavens and that the year contains this number of days in conformity with them.[58] While it is not possible to say which specific type of 365-day calendrical system is meant, the fact that Basilides taught in Egypt would lend support to the

view that the 365 days should be viewed in terms of the Egyptian calendar of 360 ordinary and 5 epagomenal days.

It is thus clear that calendrical data did play a sectarian function among the Gnostics. The question which remains pertains to the relative importance which Gnostics attached to differences in calendrical matters. While the present study shows that diverse calendrical systems are visible in the gnostic literature, no signs of an inter-gnostic calendrical polemic are visible. No instances can be found where a specific calendar is explicitly advocated or defended in *opposition* to another calendrical system. Consequently, it can hardly be concluded that calendrical data functioned as an extremely critical criterion of self-definition for specific gnostic groups.[59] On the other hand, references to calendrical data are so consistent that it would be surprising if no significance at all were attached to them.[60]

Let us now, on the basis of two examples from the gnostic literature itself, attempt to clarify the importance and function of calendrical matters in gnostic thought. The first example deals with *The Apocryphon of John.* It is evident from the above discussion that the extant versions of *The Apocryphon of John* do not share the same calendrical systems. The versions found in Codex III and BG reflect a 360-day year. The version found in Codex II, on the other hand, reflects a 365-day year.[61]

Giversen has concluded that one can neither determine whether the total 360 or 365 was original in the three versions nor what has caused a change in the original sum.[62] While it may be true that no absolutely conclusive results can be obtained, I would suggest that the following hypotheses pertaining to the original sum and the rationale behind the change are quite plausible.

It was argued above that the process by which the total sum of 365 was derived in *The Apocryphon of John* (Codex II) 11,23–25 was very nonspecific. Indeed, it appeared that the derivation was left vague because the stress was in fact on the end product rather than the substructure. Relative to Codex II the process of derivation in BG 39,7–15 is much more meaningful in terms of presenting a coherent cosmological substructure for the total of 360. Till presents the following table:

12 angels	12
each having 7 angels, 7×12	84
each of these having 3 powers, 3×84	252
	348

The missing number 12 consists either of one more power for each of the 12 angels or of the seven kings of heaven and the five kings of the underworld mentioned in BG 41,13–15.[63]

Does the version of *The Apocryphon of John* in Codex II represent a revision of BG or is the reverse true? I would suggest that the foregoing comparison indicates that the calendar in Codex II represents a revision of that of BG. When the total was changed from 360 to 365 the relatively precise substructure of BG had to be replaced by a rather imprecise structure which in effect merely provided a means of arriving at a total of 365.

What could have been the rationale for such a change? On the basis of calendrical realities in the Roman Empire during the first few centuries of this era I would propose the following hypothesis. In 46 B.C. the Julian calendar of 365-1/4 days became the standard calendar of the Roman world. Since the 1/4 day was taken into account by the addition of one day every four years, for practical purposes the year consisted of 365 days in 3 out of every 4 years. A significant segment of Christianity including gnostic Christianity spread in parts of the Roman Empire where the Julian calendar was followed. Adherence to a 360-day year could thus have been a cause of embarrassment in such a cultural context. A change from a 360 calendar/cosmology to one of 365 would thus have to be viewed in the light of an attempt at acculturation.

The phenomenon of moving away from a calendar/cosmology stressing the number 360 can also be illustrated by a comparison between *Eugnostos the Blessed* and *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*.[64] There is no doubt concerning the literary interdependence of these two writings. The scholarly debate is concerned only with the problem of whether *The Sophia of Jesus Christ* is a Christianization of *Eugnostos the Blessed* or *Eugnostos the Blessed* represents a de-Christianization of *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*. Present-day scholarly opinion is tending to the conclusion that *Eugnostos the Blessed* is the prior writing.[65]

A comparison of calendrical/cosmological data supports the view that *Eugnostos the Blessed* is the prior writing. As has been shown above, in *Eugnostos the Blessed* the numbers 5, 12, 72 and 360 play a cosmological role while only 12 and 360 are given calendrical significance. In *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, on the other hand, only the number 12^{66} is given a cosmological significance and no calendrical references are found at all. If *The Sophia of Jesus Christ* were to be the prior writing then the author/redactor of *Eugnostos the Blessed* would have had a great deal of

freedom in choosing a calendrical/cosmological system, insofar only the number 12 was found in *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*. It is therefore difficult to understand why he did not choose a system which could serve both cosmological and calendrical needs. After all, the interdependence of these two realities is clearly shown in *Eugnostos the Blessed*. If de-Christianization is proposed, then the author/redactor of *Eugnostos the Blessed* in fact chose a cosmology which was largely incompatible with his calendrical ideology, that is, of the cosmological numbers 5, 12, 72 and 360 only 12 and 360 were given calendrical significance. In effect earthly realities were not a fitting reflection of heavenly realities.

It appears much more probable that the calendrical system of *Eugnostos the Blessed* is itself a reworking of a *Vorlage*. This would account for the lack of consistency between the calendrical and cosmological systems in the writing. The author of *The Sophia of Jesus Christ* in turn found even the reworked calendrical system of *Eugnostos the Blessed* to be a cause of embarrassment. Not wanting to be in conflict with the official calendar of the Roman Empire he dropped the reference to the number 360 and only retained the number 12. After all, it appears that the number of months in the year was not a variable with respect to the various calendrical systems of the time.

It is not the contention of this paper that all gnostic groups succumbed to the social pressures of bringing their calendrical/cosmological systems in line with the calendrical reality of the particular environment in which they lived. As a matter of fact, while Valentinians were found in Rome their calendrical system clearly differed from the Julian system. Indeed, the 360-day calendar of the Valentinians may serve to illustrate the non-conformism which Jonas attributes to the gnostic mind.[67] On the other hand, the present study does suggest that such an attitude of non-conformism was not universal among Gnostics. At least some gnostic groups did accept contemporary cultural norms even when such acceptance involved the adaptation of traditional cosmological systems to fit prevailing calendrical realities. To some extent calendrical data can thus serve as an indication reflecting gnostic attitudes *vis-à-vis* acculturation.

At this point it must be made clear that calendrical considerations by no means account for all the great diversity among the cosmological systems reflected in the gnostic literature.[68] However, calendrical analysis can provide an insight into the rationale behind some of this diversity. A study of calendrical data can thus be a tool for elucidating some aspects of the development of gnostic cosmological ideas.

NOTES

[1] W. Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften* (Berlin 1962) I, 156. For a recent English translation see Violet MacDermot, *Pistis Sophia* Nag Hammadi Studies IX; (Leiden 1978).

[2] Cf. *Pistis Sophia* 132 where 365 ministers (*leitourgoi*) of the archons are mentioned in two different passages. Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, I, 222, 224.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 234.

[4] *Ibid.*, I, 236.

[5] W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (1907; rpt. Göttingen 1973) 358, has argued that the number 5 represents the ancient Babylonian week and that 360 should be divided by 5 to arrive at 72 weeks. In view of the fact that the number 72 is not found in the *Pistis Sophia* whereas the sum of 360 and 5 does play an important role, it appears that Bousset's suggestion is not well-founded.

[6] Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, I, 15.

[7] Cf. *Pistis Sophia*, chapters 7, 10, 46, 57, 86.

[8] Cf. A. E. Samuel, *Ptolemaic Chronology* (München 1962)31f.; E. Achelis, *The World Calendar* (New York 1937) 76.

[9] See A. Strobel, Zur Funktionsfähigkeit des essenischen Kalenders, *RQ* 3 (1961) 406 for a discussion of this topic.

[10] Samuel, *Ptolemaic Chronology*, p. 76.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Thus *Pistis Sophia* chapter 2. Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, I, p. 3. See L. Ideler, *Lehrbuch der Chronologie* (Berlin 1831)51, for the names of the months in the Egyptian calendar.

[13] A number of scholars refer to four versions of *The Apocryphon of John*, i.e. as found in Berolinensis Gnosticus (BG) 8502, and in Codices II, III, and IV from Nag Hammadi, cf. S. Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis* (Copenhagen 1963) 17; R. Haardt, *Gnosis*. E.t. by J. F. Hendry (Leiden 1971)180–182. F. Wisse, John, Apocryphon of, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, K. Crim, ed. (Nashville 1976), suppl. vol. p.481, refers to four copies but only three versions, that is, Codex II and IV represent two copies of the same Coptic translation of the longer version.

[14] Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis*, p. 217.

[15] F. Wisse, The Apocryphon of John, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, J. M. Robinson, ed. (San Francisco 1977)105.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Apocryphon Johannis*, p. 217.

[18] Thus E. Achelis, *The World Calendar*, p. 79. The year 45 B.C. has also been suggested, e.g. A. K. Michels, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic* (Princeton 1967)3.

[19] Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, I, 15.

[20] Thus F. H. Colson, *The Week* (1926; rpt. Westport 1974)18.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] Cf. Ideler, *Lehrbuch der Chronologie*, p. 48, who states that the first non-christian reference to a seven-day week comes from Dio Cassius in the middle of the third century A.D.

[23] This calendrical ideology was illustrated above on the basis of the version of *The Apocryphon of John* found in Codex II of Nag Hammadi. It should be noted that the references to a 365-day year in a gnostic writing entitled "*Unbekanntes altgnostisches Werk*" in Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, I, 235–367 may also refer to the Roman calendar. See especially chapter 10, p. 349; cf. chapter 7 (p. 342), 9 (p. 345), 21 (p. 364).

[24] The variant forms Habrasax and Abraxas correspond numerically to Abrasax.

[25] *Against Heresies* I, 24,3–7; cf. II, 16,2.

[26] *Refutatio omnium haeresium* VII,26,6. A. Hilgenfeld, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums* (1884; rpt. Darmstadt 1966) 199, suggests that Hippolytus is not dependent on Irenaeus in this case but that both used a common source, i.e. Justin's *Syntagma*.

[27] According to the Greek the numerical value of 'Αβρασάξ is: A = 1, B = 2, R = 100, A = 1, S = 200, A = 1, X = 60: Total is 365.

[28] Cf. *The Gospel of the Egyptians* (Codex IV) 64,21; 65,2; 76,19.

[29] A. Böhlig and F. Wisse, *Nag Hammadi Codices III,2 and IV,2, The Gospel of the Egyptians* (Leiden 1975) 22. It should also be noted that the title "*Gospel of the Egyptians*" occurs only in the scribal colophon (III 69,6); *ibid.*, p. 18.

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] *Ibid.* B. A. Pearson in a paper Egyptian Seth and Gnostic Seth, *Society of Biblical Literature 1977 Seminar Papers*, P. J. Achtmeier ed. (Missoula 1977) 25–43, has brought forth convincing arguments that the "Egyptian god Seth and the Gnostic Seth, son of Adam, are two altogether different entities" (p. 35).

[32] Cf. D. M. Parrott, Eugnostos the Blessed (III,3 and V,1) and the Sophia of Jesus Christ (III,4 and BG 8502,3), *The Nag Hammadi Library*, pp. 219–221.

[33] J. D. Turner, A Valentinian Exposition (XI,2,), *The Nag Hammadi Library*, p. 438.

[34] In Codex III,23,18 the reading is based on the following restoration, [3] 60. Thus M. Krause, P. Labib, *Die Drei Versionen des Apokryphon des Johannes* (Glückstadt 1962)79.

[35] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 71.

[36] *Apocryphon Johannis*, p. 217. Cf. W. C. Till, *Die gnostischen Schriften des Koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502* (Berlin 1972)43, n. 1, who suggests that the number 360 in BG should be seen with reference to the *Pistis Sophia* where 5 rulers reign over the 360 angels.

[37] A. Strobel, Zur Funktionsfähigkeit des essenischen Kalenders, *RQ* 3 (1961)397, n. 11.

[38] If this were the case then the 360-day gnostic year would be related to the milieu of Jewish apocalyptic and would support the view of those such as G. Quispel, *Gnostic Studies* (Istanbul 1974), I, p. ix, who points to the Jewish origin of Gnosticism.

[39] See especially *I Enoch* 82,4–6. Cf. S. Talmon, The Calendar Reckoning of the Sect from the Judaean Desert, *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, eds. C. Rabin and Y. Yadin, vol. IV (2nd ed.; Jerusalem 1965)178, n. 30, who notes with reference to *I Enoch* 74, 10–12 that "the author was acquainted also with a year of 360 days, comprising 12 months of 30 days each, without intercalary days at the end of every quarter." R. T. Beckwith, The Modern Attempt to Reconcile the Qumran Calendar with the True Solar Year, *RQ* 7 (1969-71) 389f., sees *I Enoch* 75,1–2; 82,4–6 as contending against a rough solar year of 360 days.

[40] Cf. J. A. Montgomery, *The Samaritans* (1907; rpt. New York 1968)254. See further J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars* (2nd rev. ed.; Leiden 1961) 75, concerning possible 360-day calendars underlying Ezekiel, Daniel and The Story of Ahikar and in conjunction with the Zadokites.

[41] According to Hilgenfeld, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums*, p. 51, the Marcosians are a subgroup of the Valentinians.

[42] *Against Heresies* I, 17,1.

[43] *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 358.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 358, n. 1, Bousset notes that a five-day week can also be traced to the Persians.

[45] W. R. Schoedel, Scripture and the Seventy-two Heavens of the First Apocalypse of James, *NovTest* 12 (1970)118–129.

[46] Till, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, I, p. 304.

[47] Such a view was by no means uniquely Gnostic. For example, in chapters 72–82 of *I Enoch*, the argument in favour of a 364-day year is based on the contention that only such a year accurately reflects heavenly realities. It is pointed out that there are specific leaders appointed for the months and the days of the year (82,10–14). In addition there are 12 portals in heaven (75,6) and 364 stations (75,2).

[48] Cf. J.-E. Ménard, La notion de "résurrection" dans l'Épître à Rhéginos, in M. Krause, *Essays on the Nag Hammadi Texts.* N.H.S. VI (Leiden 1975) 112, n. 1. Also see *Against Heresies* II, 14,5; I, 24,3–7; *A Valentinian Exposition* (Codex XI) 30,34–38.

[49] R. Haardt, *Gnosis*, p. 183.

[50] B. Layton, The Hypostasis of the Archons (II,4), *The Nag Hammadi Library*, p. 159. Cf. *The Gospel of Mary* (BG) 17,2; *Zostrianos* (Codex VIII) 5,19 and 129,28.

[51] *Against Heresies*, II,7,3.

[52] B. Layton, The Hypostasis of the Archons, *HTR* 69 (1976)76.

[53] The gnostic correspondence between the heavenly and earthly may well have been influenced by the Platonic concept of ideas and their images. See H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (2nd rev. ed.; Boston 1963)191, n. 24; 193. For a discussion of Plato's concept of ideas on the doctrine of Basilides see G. Quispel, *Gnostic Studies*, I,107–110.

[54] *Against Heresies* II,15,1.

[55] *Against Heresies* I,16–17.

[56] E. H. Pagels, J. D. Turner, A Valentinian Exposition (XI,2), *The Nag Hammadi Library*, pp. 435f.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 438.

[58] *Against Heresies* I,24,3–7; II,16,2. Cf. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* VII,26,6.

[59] One's perception of the relative importance of calendrical issues is related to one's view regarding the relationship between cosmology and soteriology in Gnosticism. If an accurate knowledge of minute cosmological details is viewed as being essential for salvation, then modification of cosmological details in accordance with calendrical data would presumably not be taken lightly. If, on the other hand, such cosmological details were simply illustrative of a more basic salvific truth, then less importance should be attached to changes in cosmological details. For the latter view cf. G. Quispel, *Gnosis als Weltreligion* (Zürich 1951) 40: "Die Soteriologie beherrscht die Kosmologie."

[60] It should be noted that in *Against Heresies* I,15,5 and II,25,1, Irenaeus uses the fact that Gnostics refer to diverse and contradictory systems in his attempt to refute the validity of Gnosticism.

[61] Since the text of *The Apocryphon of John* found in Codex IV is defective in many places critical to calendrical matters it has not been taken into account in the previous discussions. For example, the total number of the days in the year are not found.

[62] *Apocryphon Johannis*, pp. 217f.

[63] W. C. Till, *Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502* (Berlin 1972)43. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 201 and Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis*, p. 216 state some misgivings regarding the clarity of the derivation of the total of 360. The present argument is that *relatively* to Codex II 11,23–25, BG 39,7–15 is much more specific.

[64] For this comparison the text of *Eugnostos the Blessed* as found in both Codices III and IV of Nag Hammadi and the text of *The Sophia of Jesus Christ* as found in both Codex III and BG have been taken into account.

[65] Cf. Parrott, Eugnostos the Blessed (III,3 and V,1) and The Sophia of Jesus Christ (III,4 and BG 8502,3), *Nag Hammadi Library*, p. 206.

[66] *Sophia of Jesus Christ* BG 107,5ff. refers to 12 aeons and angels.

[67] Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 42. For the revolutionary tendency in Gnosticism see also H. Jonas, Delimitation of the Gnostic Phenomenon–Typological and Historical. *Le origini dello gnosticismo*, U. Bianchi, ed. *Numen* Suppl. 12 (Leiden 1967) 100.

[68] The great diversity in the cosmological systems has often been noted; e.g. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 43.

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